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INDIANS FAR FROM HERD IMMUNITY: 2ND SERO-SURVEY

The ICMR's second sero-survey shows the Indian population is still far from achieving herd immunity against Covid-19

REGULATORY APPROVAL AWAITED

During a social media interaction, Union Health Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan said the ICMR is researching on reports of reinfection and, although the number of such cases is negligible, the government is fully seized of the importance of the matter. He, however, cautioned that the sero-survey report should not create a sense of complacency among people

EXPERTS TO STUDY FACETS OF COVID-19

- On the emerging evidence that the infection also affects organ systems, the minister said experts are looking into these facets
- He added that India has also made rapid strides in the manufacture of ventilators, PPEs, and testing kits, among others

0.73%
COVID PREVALENCE AS PER MAY SERO-SURVEY

CHENNAI • MADURAI • VIJAYAWADA • BENGALURU • KOCHI • HYDERABAD • VISAKHAPATNAM • COIMBATORE • KOZHIKODE • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • BELAGAVI • BHUBANESWAR • SHIVAMOGGA • MANGALURU • TIRUPATI • TIRUCHY • TIRUNELVELI • SAMBALPUR • HUBBALLI • DHARMAPURI • KOTTAYAM • KANNUR • VILLUPURAM • KOLLAM • WARANGAL • TADEPALLIGUDEM • NAGAPATTINAM • THRISSUR • KALABURAGI

PROTEST AGAINST GOVT MOVE

Karnataka braces for bandh today as farmers stand firm

ANUSHA RAVI @Bengaluru

WITH farmers' unions all set to hold rallies, sit-in protests and agitations across Karnataka on Monday as part of their dawn-to-dusk bandh, Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa has appealed to the leaders to call off their stir. Insisting that a bandh cannot be allowed, the CM on Sunday said his government and its decisions were pro-farmer.

Farmers unions like the Karnataka Pranthya Raitha Sangha, Karnataka Hasiru Sene, etc., have called for a bandh protesting against controversial farm and land bills by the Union and State Governments from 6 am to 6 pm on Monday. After the CM's talks with farmer union leaders failed, the organisations have decided to go ahead with the bandh, backed by labour unions, Dalit organisations, opposition parties like the Congress and the JDS and most importantly, pro-Kannada organisations.

While farmers' union leaders have threatened to block state and national highways, the Karnataka Government has warned of strict action against anyone disrupting normal life on Monday.

"Our government's stand and the PM's intentions are pro-farmer. We brought amendments to allow farmers to sell their produce with full freedom anywhere in the country and have fulfilled a long-pending request. Our farmers' union leaders should at least now understand this. They should stop this unnecessary bandh. There is no scope for a bandh, it will not be allowed," the CM said.

Even as the government insisted that public transport will not be stalled, the Ola and Uber drivers' association has backed the bandh. Protesting farmers, members of labour unions and student organisations will gather at Town hall at 11 am.

"The Modi and Yeddyurappa governments are snatching the lives and livelihoods of our farmers. The diabolical amendments to the Land Reforms Act and APMC Act are proof of conspiracy to enslave our farmers. Karnataka Congress supports the bandh call given by farmer organisations," said Randeep Singh Surjewala, AICC general secretary in charge of Karnataka.

Surjewala arrived in Bengaluru on Sunday to lead the party's protest. KPCC president D K Shivakumar and legislature party chief Siddaramaiah will also participate in the protest outside party headquarters.

Former PM H D Deve Gowda too said his party supports farmers. "The JDS unequivocally backs the statewide bandh called for by farmers unions against the land reforms which pose the danger of rendering small and marginal farmers landless, lured by big corporate companies," he said. P4

> We brought amendments to allow farmers to sell their produce with full freedom anywhere in the country and have fulfilled a long-pending request. Our farmers' union leaders should at least now understand this.
>
> — B S Yediyurappa, CM

> The land reforms pose the danger of rendering small and marginal farmers landless, lured by big corporate companies
>
> — H D Deve Gowda, JDS national president

Businesses, offices will be open, says minister

Revenue Minister R Ashoka said, "There will be no bandh. There is no opportunity for such bandhs as per court orders. Government offices, hospitals, shops and businesses, transport services will function normally. Citizens need not worry and can continue with their routine. Stringent action will be taken against anyone indulging in violence."

Farm bills get President's assent

Farmer organisations plan Kurukshetra meet from Oct 8 to take the agitation pan-India

HARPREET BAJWA @ Chandigarh

HOURS before three contentious farm sector bills became law after President Ram Nath Kovind's assent, farmer leaders here decided to hold consultations with their counterparts across the country from October 8 at Kurukshetra to evolve a pan-India agitation strategy so as to pressure the Centre to recall the new pieces of legislation.

According to a gazette notification, the President gave assent to The Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Bill, 2020, The Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement of Price Assurance and Farm Services Bill, 2020, and The Essential Commodities (Amendment) Bill 2020. The Opposition had urged Kovind to return the bills, saying they were passed without following due process.

While the farm agitation continues to rock Punjab, elsewhere it has not found similar resonance. Bharatiya Kisan Union's (Rajewal Group) Punjab president Balbir Singh Rajewal said, "A meeting was held on Sunday in which leaders of farm organisations from Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh took part. To take the agitation pan-India, it was decided that, on October 8, a marathon meeting will be held at Kurukshetra for two-three days. Two to three representatives of all famers' organisations from across the country will be invited for the brainstorming sessions."

Meanwhile, farmers in Punjab squatted on the Amritsar-Delhi railway track on Sunday to wrap up their three-day 'rail-roko' agitation. From October 1, they intend to launch an indefinite 'rail-roko' in Punjab.

Sarwan Singh Pandher, general secretary of the Kisan Mazdoor Sangharsh Committee, an umbrella group that is leading the agitation, said BJP leaders will not be allowed to enter Punjab villages in protest.

Modi's hard sell

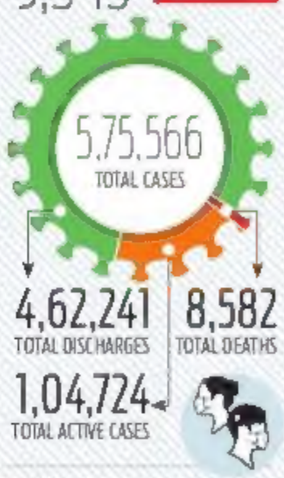
Reaching out to farmers, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said the farm sector and farmers are the very basis of Atmanirbhar Bharat, adding the farm bills ensure freedom to sell their produce anywhere at higher rates | P7

Bikers take off on a rally which was flagged off by Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa from Vidhana Soudha on the occasion of World Tourism Day, in Bengaluru on Sunday | SRIRAM BN

Tourism policy eyes ₹5,000 cr spend by 2025

Bengaluru: Karnataka on Sunday unveiled its new Tourism policy, which aims to generate over 10 lakh direct and indirect jobs in the sector and Rs 5,000 crore in investments by 2025. With the new policy, the government aims at increasing the contribution of tourism from 14.8 per cent to 20 per cent of GSDP by 2025. "Agri Tourism and Rural Tourism are the core tourism themes of the policy with the objective to promote not just agricultural and farming activities but also various aspects of rural life in Karnataka such as local cuisine, culture, traditions, arts etc," the State Government said | P2

KARNATAKA COVID-19 BATTLE



- All artistes participating at the Dasara celebrations in Mysuru to be tested
- Bengaluru Urban district reports 4,217 positive cases on Sunday
- The state reported 79 fatalities during the day

P4

MONETARY REVIEW

RBI may stick to status quo on rates

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ New Delhi

WITH inflation rising, mainly due to supply side issues, the Reserve Bank of India may keep interest rates unchanged in the forthcoming bilateral monetary policy, according to market experts.

The six-member Monetary Policy Committee (MPC), headed by RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das, is scheduled to meet for three days starting September 29. The resolution of the MPC will be announced on October 1. Das had earlier said that though there is headroom for further monetary policy action, it is important to keep 'our arsenal dry and use it judiciously'.

In its last MPC meeting in August, the central bank had kept policy rates unchanged to help tame inflation which had surged past the 6 per cent mark in recent times. The RBI has cut policy rates by 115 bps since February.

On the upcoming policy review, industry body Confederation of India Industry said, "The RBI should maintain its accommodative stance, while avoiding a rate cut for now, given the stickiness in consumer price index inflation. While supporting growth is critical, the RBI could wait till there is some visible moderation in inflation."

Assocham Secretary General Deepak Sood too felt the RBI should continue in a more pronounced way the accommodative stance on the policy interest rates in the wake of serious challenges due to contraction in the economy induced by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Bengaluru eyes future mobility with hyperloop link to airport

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Bengaluru

IMAGINE commuting from the city to Kempegowda International Airport (KIA) in a flash. The Bangalore International Airport Limited (BIAL) and Virgin Hyperloop on Sunday signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for a feasibility study to link Kempegowda International Airport (KIA) with the city with super high-speed hyperloop transportation. If the project takes off, this will be the first hyperloop transportation system in India.

This mode of transportation uses electric propulsion and electromagnetic levitation under near-vacuum conditions. With speeds of up to 1,080 kmph, the hyperloop can transport thousands of passengers per hour from the airport to the city in under 10 minutes, according to a preliminary analysis. Travellers can also streamline their multimodal trip with seamless check-in and security for both their hyperloop as well as air travel at centrally-located hyperloop portals.

WHAT'S IN IT

- MoU to study viable hyperloop corridors from Bengaluru airport
- BIAL eyes making airport a transportation hub
- Hyperloop can connect the airport to the city centre in 10 minutes

Virgin Hyperloop, an American transportation technology company which works to commercialise the high-speed hyperloop technology concept, claims to be the only company in the world that has successfully tested the technology at scale, launching the first new mode of mass transportation in over 100 years.

The company successfully operated a full-scale hyperloop vehicle using electric propulsion and electromagnetic levitation under near-vacuum conditions in Texas, US, realizing a fundamentally new form of transportation that is faster, safer, cheaper, and more sustainable than existing modes. The company is now working with governments, partners, and investors around the world to make hyperloop transportation a reality in a few years. P2

EXPRESS READ

No intention of joining hands with Sena: BJP

Mumbai: Former Maharashtra CM Devendra Fadnavis on Sunday asserted that the BJP has no intention of joining hands with the Shiv Sena or to bring down the Maha Vikas Aghadi government.

Two militants killed in encounter in Pulwama

Srinagar: Two militants were killed in an encounter with security forces, during a cordon and search operation in the Samboora area, in Jammu and Kashmir's Pulwama district on Sunday.

Pregnant woman among 7 killed in road mishap

Kalaburagi: Seven people, including a pregnant woman, were killed in Kalaburagi district early on Sunday, when the car they were travelling in rammed into a parked truck, police said.

IPL TODAY

BANGALORE VS MUMBAI

After a winning start, RCB suffered a big defeat at the hands of Kings XI Punjab. It showed their death bowling and middle-order remains a cause of concern. MI, on the other hand, responded to their defeat against CSK by making a strong statement against KKR.

RESULT: RR beat KXIP

ODDS: RCB 6/5 MI 3/4

LIVE: Star Sports1/Hotstar @ 7.30pm

UNIFORM TO KHADI

Jaswant Singh got angry on seeing Capt Saurabh Kalia's autopsy report

GENERAL V P MALIK (RETD)

THE demise of Jaswant Singhji is a big loss to the country as we lost a politician of the old school who used to be very dignified and committed to his responsibilities. He used to respect every person in uniform and was liked by everyone for his oratory and unassuming nature. He was close to the then Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee. Singh passed away after a long illness at the Army's Research and Referral Hospital in New Delhi. He was 82.

While I was Chief of Army Staff, he was the Minister of External Affairs and we got to interact during the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) meetings. He always used to participate in the meetings very actively and had lots of inputs to offer. Although he never showed his anger in public, he became agitated after I briefed him about the autopsy report of Capt Saurabh Kalia (who was captured by Pakistani intruders on May 15, 1999). Pakistan had returned his mutilated body on June 9.

As Singh was to address the media that day, I had advised him to let the post-mortem report come in, so that we could ascertain the facts. I remember him coming to the Military Operations room where I showed him the autopsy report. He became visibly angry. Later, when he briefed the media, he used harsh words which he would never have otherwise.

While the Kargil operations were on, we used to often brief the CCS, and during one such meeting, we got to know that

Nawaz Sharif, Pakistan's Prime Minister, wanted to send his foreign minister Sartaj Aziz for talks, but I was reluctant. I thought while troops were fighting in Kargil, it could have sent a wrong message to the soldiers on the battlefront. But, all my fears were gone by the way Singh handled the entire situation. When Aziz arrived on June 12, 1999, Singh did not shake hands with him. Although Singh maintained decorum, he displayed his anger with his body language, making it clear that he was not interested in talking to Aziz.

There was respect for Singh from every quarter. In fact, his opinion in the CCS meetings carried a lot of weight. This was confirmed to me by Yashwant Sinha after I had left the service. During one of my meetings with Sinha, I told him of the faster decision-making on the defence sector during that time. Sinha had no qualms in admitting that even on defence matters, the words of Singh carried a lot of weight. P8

(The author is ex-Army Chief. As told to Mayank Singh)

> Jaswant Singh Ji will be remembered for his unique perspective on matters of politics and society... I will always remember our interactions. Om Shanti — Narendra Modi, Prime Minister

WITH THIS ISSUE
THE ESSENTIAL CAMPUS DIGEST edex
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